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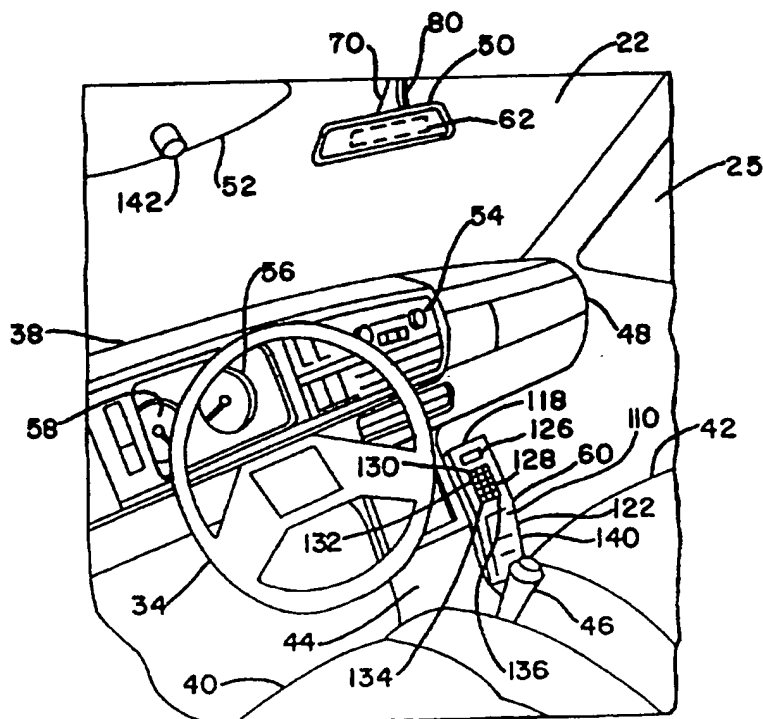
INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(51) International Patent Classification ⁶ : H01Q 1/32, H05K 11/02		A1	(11) International Publication Number: WO 96/29755
			(43) International Publication Date: 26 September 1996 (26.09.96)
(21) International Application Number: PCT/US96/03339			(81) Designated States: AU, BG, BR, CA, CN, CZ, ES, FI, HU, JP, KP, KR, KZ, LK, LV, MG, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SK, UA, UZ, VN, European patent (AT, BE, CH, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).
(22) International Filing Date: 12 March 1996 (12.03.96)			
(30) Priority Data: 08/406,111 17 March 1995 (17.03.95) US 08/502,015 28 August 1995 (28.08.95) US			
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(54) Title: IN-VEHICLE ANTENNA

(57) Abstract

A vehicle antenna system has a special vehicle antenna that can be hidden from view so as to deter thieves and vandals as well as prevent damage to the antenna during car washes. In the preferred form, the antenna comprises a rearview-mirror-mounted antenna (50). The antenna can also comprise a sun-visor-mounted antenna (52), side-view-mirror-mounted antenna (26), glove-compartment-mounted antenna (48), or dashboard-mounted antenna (38).



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IN-VEHICLE ANTENNA

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

5 This invention pertains to antennas and, more particularly, to vehicle antennas for car phones and radios.

A radio antenna can be used to radiate electromagnetic energy, radio frequency current, voltage and radio waves into space and/or to intercept, collect and receive electromagnetic energy, radio frequency current, voltage and radio waves from space. The fundamental radio antenna is a metal rod which has a physical length approximately
10 equal to one-half a wavelength in space at the frequency of operation. Such an antenna is known as a half-wavelength dipole or half-wave dipole. The length of a half-wave dipole determines the resonant wavelength or frequency of the antenna. When excited by radio frequency signals of the resonant wavelength, standing waves of voltage and current are produced along the half-wave dipole. There is a high voltage and low current
15 at each end of the dipole and high current and low voltage at the center of the dipole. Standing waves makes it possible to build up strong electrostatic and electromagnetic fields. Radiation of energy takes places at the resonant wavelength or frequency of the antenna. Radiation of energy is maximum in a direction perpendicular to the dipole.

Classes of antennas include: elevated Hertz antennas, vertical grounded Marconi
20 antennas, long wire antennas, wideband dipoles, folded dipoles, half-wave dipoles, tunable dipoles, V-shaped antennas, fan antennas, rhombic antennas, unidirectional phased arrays, parasitic arrays, Bruce arrays, quarter wave vertical antennas, ground plane antennas, turnstile antennas, loop antennas, cloverleaf antennas, slotted antennas, pylon antennas, bat wing antennas, rotatable antennas, multiband antennas, retractable
25 antennas and power antennas.

Vehicle antennas are useful for AM (amplitude modulation) radios, FM (frequency modulation) radios, AM/FM radios, and cellular mobile telephones. Most radio antennas for automobiles extend upwardly from the rear of the automobiles, such as near the rear window and trunk.

30 Cellular mobile telephone service utilizes radio transmission to provide direct-dial telephone service to car phones in automobiles, vans, trucks, buses, and other vehicles. Since there are no overhead telephone lines which connect the vehicles, both speech and signaling are transmitted by radio waves. This is accomplished through the use of special tones rather than applying a voltage level or detecting a current as is done
35 in overhead telephone lines. The tones will ring the mobile telephone to indicate an

incoming call or will indicate a busy signal.

Until recent years, the growth of mobile telephones had been restricted due to the limited number of radio channels available and the limited range, i.e. 25-30 miles, of single base transmitting units. Subsequently, the cellular concept was developed to provide high quality mobile service for more customers at an affordable cost. The basic concept of a cellular system is to reduce the area covered by the transmitter by reducing the power of transmissions. In this manner, concentrated areas of population can have more transmitting stations and therefore, more channels because each transmitter handles numerous telephone conversations. Moreover, because the lower power transmitters cover less area, the same frequency can be reused in a common geographical area.

In a cellular system, the service area is divided into regions called cells. Each cell has equipment to switch, transmit, and receive calls to and from the mobile telephone units located in the cell. A typical cell can have a radius of one to 12 miles. Each cell transmitter and receiver operates on a specified channel. Desirably, each channel is used for many simultaneous conversations at locations which are far enough apart to avoid interference. As the number of mobile users grow, the overloaded cells can be split or divided into smaller cells by adding more transmitters.

Cell sites form the radio link between individual cellular telephones and the telephone system. Each cell station is equipped with a transmitter and receiver coupled to an array of antennas. The cell sites also have a telephone switching network and other support equipment. The cells are located where they will operate most effectively in the radio environment. In urban area, cell sites are usually found on top of the tall buildings. In rural areas, cell sites are located at the highest levels, such as on mountains or on radio towers. To minimize interference, adjacent cells use different frequencies.

The cell sites are interconnected and controlled by radio transmission by switching circuitry through a central mobile telephone switching office (MTSO). The MTSO is linked to the cell sites by a group of voice circuits for conversations, together with one or more data links for signaling and control. A call initiated by a mobile telephone unit can be interconnected by the MTSO to a stationary telephone just as any other telephone call.

The mobile telephone units have a telephone control unit, a handset, a mobile telephone antenna, and interconnecting cables. Each mobile telephone unit is assigned a ten digit telephone number. The control unit performs all the functions associated with normal telephone use. The receiver and transmitter provide a transceiver and they are the means by which signals are sent between the cellular telephone and the cell site. The

receiver can tune to frequency modulated (FM) channels assigned to the cellular system. such as in the 800-900 MHZ range. The band from 824-849 MHZ is often used to receive signals from the mobile units. The transmitter can tune to the appropriate FM band. The band from 869-894 MHZ is often used to transmit signals to the mobile units.

5 The mobile units transmits at a low power. The base station transmits at a higher power.

Generally, each cellular telephone has a small integrated circuit or chip providing a numeric assignment module (NAM). The NAM chip is programmed usually by the cellular telephone dealer or installer to contain the information that uniquely identifies the cellular telephone with a cell site. The information programmed in the NAM chip includes the telephone number and serial number of the cellular telephone. The computers at the MTSO and the cell site use this information to identify the particular cellular telephone when transmitting and receiving calls.

10 Most cellular telephone manufacturers and supplies offer hands-free accessories that make it unnecessary to hold the handset while talking on the cellular telephone. A typical hands-free installation, includes a small microphone, which clips onto the windshield's sun visor to pick up the driver's end of the conversation and a speaker in the control head of the cellular telephone. Removing the handset from its cradle restores the cellular telephone to its normal operation and deactivates the microphone external speaker (speaker phone) to end the hands-free mode.

15 When the handset is lifted or a button is pressed to place a call, the MTSO automatically selects an available channel. The user hears the normal dial tone and can continue dialing, i.e. pressing the alpha/numeric buttons, in the same manner as a stationary telephone with overhead telephone lines. An incoming call to the mobile unit is signaled by a ringing tone and is answered simply by lifting the handset or pressing the receive button. The mobile telephone transmitter is linked by a voice channel to another telephone, such as another mobile telephone or a stationary telephone.

20 Each cell site has at least one setup channel dedicated to signal between the cell and its mobile units. The remaining channels are for conversations. Two channels are required for duplex operation. A mobile telephone unit is called by transmitting its number over the setup channel. This occurs when the cellular telephone is taken off-hook. The cellular transmitter links to an available set-up channel and send a request tone to the serving cell site. The cell site assigns a voice channel set over which dialing and voice signals will take place. The cellular control circuit automatically switches to the voice channel. The cell site interprets incoming dial tones and send the digits along

to the MTSO which will connect the cellular telephone to the recipient telephone. When the recipient telephone is taken off-hook, the telephone are linked and a conversation can take place. As vehicles move (roam) out of the cells and the cellular signal becomes weaker, the MTSO switches to another cell to establish a new voice channel with a stronger signal, by a switching procedure known as a handoff. Handoffs take place so rapidly by a computerized switching system, that cellular users do not even know that it has occurred.

In most mobile cellular phone installations, the phone receives its power from a vehicle battery. If it is part of a permanent installation, the phone may be permanently connected, or hard wired, to the vehicle's electrical system. If the phone is intended to be removed occasionally, a quick disconnect plug or an adapter that lets the telephone take its power from the vehicle's cigarette lighter can be used. For permanent installations, the transceiver/logic unit can be mounted in the trunk of the automobile and connected to the control head and car battery by cables. This location also places a trunk-mounted transceiver close to a rear trunk-mounted antenna. This arrangement shortens the length of feedline cable connecting the rear antenna to the transceiver. Generally, the shorter the feedline cable in cellular telephones, the stronger the transmission and the better the reception.

An antenna is a length of wire that radiates or captures radio signals. Without an antenna, the cellular telephone would be virtually useless since the telephone would have no means to transmit and receive signals to and from a cell site. Because of the microwave frequencies utilized in cellular telephones, it is possible to make the cellular telephone antennas quite small. Cellular telephone antennas come in many shapes and sizes. Some antennas are intended for permanent mounting and some for easy removal. Some are intended for vehicle use and others are to be attached to a portable phone. Some antennas are mounted on metal. Other antennas are mounted on glass.

An antenna typically needs a ground plane to provide a surface to launch radio waves, even though there is no electrical connection between it and the antenna. A ground plane should have a radius equal to at least one quarter of the wavelength of the radio wave. Since the frequencies used by cellular telephone wavelengths are quite short, very little in the way of a ground plane is needed. Generally for an antenna to radiate an omnidirectional signal, i.e. one that radiates outwardly in all directions from the antenna, the antenna should be mounted as close to the center of the ground plane as possible.

Roof-mounted antennas are secured to the roof of the vehicle. Metal roofs

provide a convenient ground plane. the roof is also the highest point on the vehicle so that signals emitted from and transmitted to the antenna are less likely to be obstructed by nearby objects. The roof-mounted antenna can be connected to the internal dome light on the ceiling. The cable can then be placed in the ceiling liner for connection to the telephone. Roof-mounted antennas require a hole in the roof. Roof-mounted antennas usually extend at least a foot above the roof of the car. Roof-mounted antennas are not very popular with automobile drivers because they can be easily damaged by low garage doors and car washes. Roof-mounted antennas are not very popular with truck drivers because they can be readily damaged by low overpasses. Furthermore, roof-mounted antennas are not easily accessible for removal or repair.

Trunk-mounted antennas can be mounted on the trunk of an automobile through a hole in the trunk or with a clip that attaches to the edge of the trunk. The cable can be positioned in the space between the trunk and the body of the car. The metal trunk provides the ground plane. Elevated feed antennas can also be used in which the signal is received into the antenna above its base.

Magnetic-mount antennas are intended for easy installation and removal on the roof or trunk lid of a car. The magnetic-mount antenna has a base with a powerful permanent magnet that holds base of the antenna firmly to the metal surface of the vehicle.

External glass-mounted antennas are mounted on the exterior surface of the vehicle's rear window. The external glass-mounted antenna have an antenna rod, base, and a mounting plate. The mounting plate is cemented to the rear window with a weatherproof adhesive or can be placed on the rear window with a suction cup. The base, which can also serve as a mounting plate, contains a circuit that substitutes for the metal ground plane that would otherwise be provided by the roof or trunk of the car. The other parts of the antenna are glued to the inside of the window directly opposite the outside portion. The signal transmitted to and from the external glass-mounted antenna are coupled through the glass by capacitive action, which allows a current to develop between the two section of the antenna system without any physical connection between them. The coaxial cable is connected to the inner portion of the external glass-mounted antenna and extends into the vehicle's rear deck to the telephone. The efficiency of external glass-mounted antennas can be adversely effected by the rear window defogger and rear window heating elements. External glass-mounted antennas are useful but do not perform as well as roof-mounted antennas.

External cellular antennas typically have a pigtail or squiggle providing a

phasing coil partway up its length. The phasing coil serves to divide the antenna into two antennas: one above the phasing coil and one below the phasing coil. The phasing coil is designed to maintain the proper phase relationship of the radio waves received by the antenna so that each half of the antenna receives the proper portion of the signal. A
5 5dB antenna usually has two phasing coils or pigtails to properly distribute the signal.

The efficiency of external antennas can be adversely effected by external weather conditions, e.g. ice, snow, sleet, rain, winds, smog. Furthermore, external antennas can be readily bent, broken, or otherwise damaged in car washes. External antennas are also attractive to thieves since external antennas are readily accessible and can be easily
10 removed with proper tools. Sometimes, external antennas are broken in parking garages and parking lots by vandals.

In-vehicle antennas mount inside the vehicle. In-vehicle rear window antennas can be secured to the inside surface of the rear windows of vehicles but peel-back double sided tape or by Velcro tabs. The rear window antennas are mounted vertically
15 in the center of the rear window, but can also be attached instead to the front or side windows. In-vehicle antennas perform almost as well as external glass-mounted antennas.

It is, therefore, desirable to develop an improved vehicle antenna for use with vehicle telephones and radios which overcomes most, if not all, of the preceding
20 problems.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

An improved antenna and system is provided for use with vehicles. The radio antenna and system are useful for AM (amplitude modulation) radios, FM (frequency modulation) radios, AM and FM radios, and cellular mobile telephones. The novel
25 antenna and system are attractive, economical, reliable and effective. The inventive antennae and system are useful in many types of vehicles, such as: automobiles, station wagons, vans, trucks, jeeps, taxicabs, buses, motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles, road-grading equipment, backhoe, tractors, and agricultural vehicles.

The antenna system has a vehicle antenna-housing connected to the vehicle. The
30 antenna is secured to the antenna-housing. A coaxial cable connects the antenna to the cellular telephone and/or to the radio at a location spaced from the trunk of the vehicle. The cellular telephone has a transceiver with a handset and can be connected to a battery in the vehicle. Remarkably, the placement and shape of the antenna and housing described herein decrease signal interference and improve reception and the strength of
35 the telephone signals and radio signals, because a shorter coaxial cable is used to connect

the telephone and/or radio to the antennae.

In the preferred form, the antenna is an in-vehicle antenna positioned in an in-vehicle antenna-housing in the interior of a vehicle. Desirably, the antenna provides a disguise antenna which is hidden from view to make the antenna less visible and accessible to thieves and vandals and, therefore, minimizes antenna theft. Since the anti-theft antenna is encased in a protective housing, it cannot be bent, broken, or otherwise damaged in car washes. Advantageously, the in-vehicle antenna is not contacted and adversely effected by external weather conditions, e.g. ice, snow, sleet, rain, winds, smog.

The novel antenna is also less obstructive to the passengers and provide a greater unimpaired range of vision for the driver. Furthermore, the antenna enhances the aesthetic appeal and ambiance of the vehicle.

In one preferred embodiment, the in-vehicle antenna-housing comprises a rear view mirror. In another embodiment, the in-vehicle antenna-housing comprises a glove compartment. In a further embodiment, the in-vehicle antenna-housing comprises a sun visor positioned above the front windshield in proximity to a driver or passenger above a front seat of the vehicle. This is particularly useful for hands-free operation, where a small microphone is clipped, pinned or otherwise secured onto the windshield's sun visor to pick up the driver's end of the conversation. In this manner, the sun visor is already connected to the electrical system of the vehicle. In still another embodiment, the in-vehicle antenna-housing comprises a dashboard.

In some circumstances, it may be desirable that the vehicle housing comprises a side view mirror mounted externally on the side of the car adjacent a car door, either on the driver side or the passenger side. Remotely operated power-moveable side mirror are particularly adaptable for cellular telephone antennas, since they are already connected to the electrical power source of the vehicle, e.g. the car battery.

While it is preferred that the antenna be encased in the housing, it may be desirable in some circumstances that the antennae which extends externally upwardly from the mirror housing or other antenna-housing.

A more detailed explanation of the invention is provided in the following description and claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a diagrammatic view of a vehicle with an antenna system in accordance with principles of the present invention:

Figure 2 is a diagrammatic view of the interior of the vehicle:

Figure 3 is a front view of a rear view mirror;

Figure 4 is a side view of a rear view mirror housing;

Figure 5 is an exploded view of the rear view mirror housing with an internal antenna; and

5 Figure 6 is an enlarged front view of the antenna mounted on an antenna-board.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The vehicle 10 shown in Figures 1 and 2 illustrates an automobile with: tires 11; an exterior body 12 having a hood 14, roof 16, trunk 18, doors 20; front windshield 22 (front window), side windows 24 and 25, side view mirrors 26, an interior engine compartment 28, vehicle battery 30, trunk compartment 32, a steering wheel 34, ceiling 36, dashboard 38, driver's seat 40 (Figure 2), front passenger seat 42, center console 44, drive shift 46, glove compartment 48, rear view mirror 50, sun visor 52, AM/FM radio 54, speedometer 56, tachometer 58, and cellular telephone system 60. While the particular vehicle shown is an automobile, it is to be understood that the inventive antenna system and antenna can be used with other types of vehicles, such as: station wagons, vans, trucks, jeeps, buses, motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles, road-grading equipment, backhoes, tractors and other agricultural vehicles.

15 The antenna system has an in-vehicle antenna 62 (Figures 5 and 6) comprising a cellular telephone antenna and/or radio antenna, which is secured by a clip, screw, or other fasteners to a vehicle antenna-housing 64. The antenna can extend externally upwardly or outwardly from the vehicle antenna-housing.

In the preferred embodiment, the antenna 62 is hidden from view and is encased and positioned within and surrounded by the vehicle antenna-housing 64. The vehicle antenna-housing can comprise: the sun visor, glove compartment, ceiling fabric, doors, rear view mirror, or side view mirror.

25 Preferably, the vehicle-antenna housing is an in-vehicle antenna-housing assembly comprising a rear view mirror housing 64. The rear view mirror housing can be made of plastic, preferably impact-resistant plastic. If desired, metal, wood or other materials can be used.

30 The rear view mirror housing 64 (Figures 4 and 5) has a rear housing portion 66 which matingly engages and is secured to a front housing portion 68. A rear view mirror 70 (Figures 3 and 4) is clipped, bonded, or otherwise securely fastened to and peripherally surrounded by the front mirror portion. The rear view mirror is located at a position for viewing by the driver of the vehicle. The rear view mirror can be made of glass and coated with silver or other reflective coating. In some circumstances, it may

35

be desirable that the mirror be made of reflective plastic or polished metal.

An extension arm 70 (Figures 4 and 5) providing a mirror-mounting arm is securely fastened or otherwise connected to the back 72 of the rear housing portion. A universal swivel joint 74 connects the extension arm to a mounting plate 76 or mounting bracket. The mounting plate is bolted or otherwise secured to the ceiling of the vehicle or windshield. The extension arm, swivel joint, and mounting plate provide an articulated arm 78 which enables the mirror housing and mirror to be moved 360 degrees to position desired by the driver so that the driver can view rearwardly approaching vehicles through the back window (rear windshield). In some circumstances, it may be desirable to use a hollow or tubular extension arm and mounting plate so that the antenna-cable 80 can extend through and be hidden from view in the hollow or tubular extension arm and mounting plate.

The back of the rear housing can have one or more mirror-housing windows 82 facing the front windshield at a location above or below the extension arm. The mirror-housing windows permit light, radio waves, and telephone signals to enter and exit the interior of the rear housing. The mirror-housing windows communicate with the front windshield and cellular telephone antenna within the mirror housing so that radio wave and telephone signals can pass through the front windshield and mirror-housing windows and be received by and radiate from the cellular telephone antenna. In some circumstances, it may also be desirable to have mirror-housing windows in the sides of the mirror housing facing the side windows.

The rear view mirror housing can also contain dimming circuitry to vary the reflectiveness of the mirror in response to the intensity of light from rearwardly approaching vehicles, as well as for daytime and nighttime driving.

The omnidirectional in-vehicle antenna 62 comprises a mirror-mounted in-vehicle antenna securely mounted and positioned in the interior of the rear view mirror housing behind the rear view mirror. The antenna can be positioned horizontally or vertically. The antenna is tuned to receive and transmit telephone signals and radio signals. More specifically, the antenna transmits telephone signals along a frequency modulated band to another telephone. The antenna also receives telephone signals from another telephone along frequency modulated channels. The antenna can also be tuned to receive AM radio signals and FM radio signals for use with an AM/FM radio.

The in-vehicle antenna can be made of copper or other conductive metal. The antenna is adhesively or thermally bonded or otherwise secured and mounted to a generally planar or flat light-transmissive antenna-board 84 (Figure 6) or circuit board.

The board can be made of plastic and can be transparent or translucent to facilitate the passage of radio wave and telephone signals to the antenna. The antenna is soldered or connected by conductive metal or wires to the base 86 (Figure 5) or annular rim of the cable-connecting socket or adapter 88, that is bonded or otherwise secured to the board.

5 The adapter 88 can be positioned rearwardly or forwardly to facilitate attachment to the coaxial cable 80.

In the illustrative embodiment, the in-vehicle antenna comprising a cellular telephone antenna and/or radio antenna has aligned outwardly-diverging flared antenna sections 90 and 92 (Figure 6). The antenna sections are tapered away from the center of the antenna and antenna-board. The cross sectional area of each flared antenna section increases stepwise towards the center of the antenna and antenna-board. One antenna section 90 has a thicker inner antenna portion 94 with a transversely extending central foot portion 96 and has an elongated thinner outer portion 98 connected by an inwardly diverging frustro-conical tapered portion 99 to the thicker inner antenna portion 94. The inner antenna portion 94 is thicker, i.e. has a larger cross section, than the outer antenna portion 98. The other antenna section 92 has a thicker, but shorter, inner antenna portion 100, a much thinner outer antenna portion 102, and an intermediate thickness antenna portion 104 between the inner and outer antenna portions. The intermediate antenna portion 104 is connected by inwardly diverging frustro-conical tapered portions 106 and 108 to the inner and outer antenna portions 100 and 102. The cross section area of the intermediate portion 104 is greater than the outer portion 102 but less than the inner portion 100.

The antenna system includes: the antenna 62, cellular telephone 110 (Figures 1 and 2), radio 54, coaxial feeder cable 80, and battery 30. The battery provides an electrical power source which powers the cellular telephone system and radio. In the illustrative embodiment, a vehicle battery in the engine compartment is wired to the radio and cellular telephone by power cable 112. The coaxial cable 80 connects the antenna to the radio and cellular telephone. Desirably, the coaxial feeder cable and said mirror-mounted antennae have matching impedances to substantially minimize standing waves and loss of transmission power.

In the illustrated embodiment, an externally threaded antenna-connector 88 (Figure 5) providing a cable adapter is secured to the board and electrically connected to the antenna. The antenna-connector has an interior port or opening and provides a female cable-receiving connector, plug, or adapter. The antenna-connector matingly engages and receives the L-shaped male connector 114 on the antenna feedline cable

(coaxial cable).

The coaxial cable can comprises a center conductor surrounded by an electrical insulating layer and a shield of thin braided copper wire. The center conductor and shield are encased in another insulation layer. The antenna input impedance should
5 match the antenna feeder cable to prevent standing waves and loss of transmission power. The L-shaped male connector on the coaxial cable is connected to the female connector 88 on the internal cellular antenna. The other male TNC connector on the cable is connected to the cellular phone transceiver 116.

The cable can also be connected to the AM and/or FM vehicle radio and/or
10 cellular telephone, either directly, or through a splitter connection, or by a separate cable connected to another adapted plug/socket on the board. The length of the cable can be hidden from view by running, positioning and burying the cable under the dashboard, car molding and fabric in the ceiling and/or door.

The illustrated rear view mirror-mounted antenna can also be used for: a visor-mounted antenna, a dashboard-mounted antenna, a side view mirror-mounted antenna,
15 a door-mounted antenna, a glove compartment-mounted antenna. All of the above described antennas are useful as vehicle antennas for connection to cellular vehicle telephones and to an AM and/or FM vehicle radio. While the illustrated antenna is preferred for reasons of economy and effectiveness, in some circumstances it may be
20 desirable to use an antenna have a different shape and orientation.

The cellular vehicle mobile telephone has a telephone control unit 116 (Figure 1), handset 118, and cradle 120. The telephone control unit comprises a transceiver and provides a logic unit. The cellular telephone can comprise an analog cellular telephone, digital cellular telephone, or preferably a dual mode cellular telephone that has both an
25 analog capacity and a digital capacity of 832 radio frequency (RF) channels with 3 watts power. The telephone can transmit from 824-849 MHz and can receive from 969-894 Mhz. The cellular telephone can have a frequency stability of 2.5 PPM, a channel spacing of 30 KHZ, and a duplex spacing of 45 MHz. The cellular telephone can operate on a supply voltage of 11-16.5 volts with a current of 1.5 amps.

The transceiver can be mounted under the dashboard by a mounted bracket and bolts or other fasteners. If desired, the transceiver can be mounted under the driver's seat, front passenger seat, in the glove compartment, or in the trunk. The transceiver
30 can contain an amplifier, demodulator, and circuitry for tuning to telephone signals received by said cellular telephone antenna, as well as carrier oscillators, amplifiers, and
35 circuitry for transmitting telephone signals through the cellular telephone antenna. The

transceiver can be contained in a black box, such as of 30 mm height x 210 mm length x 90 mm width and weighing about 0.7 kg. Other size and weight transceivers can be used.

5 The handset 118 (Figures 1 and 2) can include a handset-housing which can be molded out of impact-resistant plastic. The handset-housing can comprise two or more separable parts separated by a parting line for access into the interior of the handset. The handset housing can include a back 122 and a front 124.

10 The back of the handset has a convex shape and generally faces towards the driver when the telephone is not in use. When in use, the back of the handset fits comfortably in the palm of the user's hand. The upper portion of the back of the handset has a rectangular handset-display window 126 to indicate and display the telephone number being called/dialed. The handset display-window is positioned to be readily viewed by the driver. The back of the handset has a keypad 128 (Figure 2) with finger-engageable, depressible, resilient keys 130 positioned below the display window.

15 The keys can be rectangular or circular. The keys can include: alpha numeric buttons 132, a send/receive button 134, a clear/stop/end button 136, a recall button, a store button, and automatic dialing buttons for user-programmed stored telephone numbers.

20 A speaker 140 (Figure 2) can be mounted in the back of the handset below the keys for hands free telephone discussions in conjunction with a speaker-microphone 142 mounted on the sun visor or on the ceiling in proximity to the sun visor. The microphone can be hardwired to the cradle or base unit of the cellular telephone. The microphone wire can be hidden from view by running, positioning and burying the wire under the dashboard, car molding and fabric in the ceiling and/or door.

25 The front of the handset has a finger-grippable concave handle 144 (Figure 1) which extends between and integrally connects the top earpiece 146 to the bottom mouthpiece 148. The handset can be 61 mm height x 62 mm wide x 200 mm length and a weight of about 0.4 kg. Other size and weight handsets can be used.

30 The earpiece can have a convex circular ear-engageable portion with earholes to receive the sender's voice from a diaphragm or other vibrating means which converts current and voltage in audible tones. The earpiece can be connected to a receiving-circuit within the interior of the handset to receive telephone signals from other telephones via the transceiver, coaxial cable, and antenna, to unscramble and convert telephone signals into recognizable audible tones for the listener's ear.

35 The mouthpiece can comprise an inclined, sloped, or recessed portion with

mouthpiece holes for transmission of the user's voice to a diaphragm or other vibrating means which convert acoustical vibrations (words) into electrical impulses, i.e. voltage and current. The mouthpiece can be connected to a transmitting-circuit within the interior of the handset to transmit telephone signals via the transceiver, coaxial cable, and antenna, to scramble and convert the user's voice/talking into telephone signals for transmission to the receiving telephone.

The bottom of the handset has a cord-receiving opening which provides a port or socket to receive a handset-engaging plug, adapter, and/or connector, attached to a telephone cord 150. The other end of the telephone cord has a base-engaging plug, adapter, and/or connector which matingly engages and fits into a port or socket in the base unit or cradle 120 of the telephone.

The cradle 120 or base unit is shaped complementary to the earpiece of the handset to receive at least the earpiece of the handset. The earpiece can snap-fit into the cradle or can be removably secured to the cradle by a magnet or other connection means. The base unit also has a cable-receiving opening which provides a port or socket to receive a male connector, plug, and/or adapter, attached to antenna-feed cable (coaxial cable). The base unit can also have a socket or adapter to receive the microphone wire. The base unit can be hard wired to the transceiver. The base unit and/or transceiver is operatively connected to the vehicle battery by a power cable or electrical power circuit.

Example

An in-vehicle antenna was installed in the interior of a rear view mirror of a vehicle and was connected by a coaxial cable to the cellular telephone. The transmission and reception was clear and strong and produced unexpected surprisingly good results. The mirror was located above the center of the dashboard and was attached to the ceiling or interior surface of the roof. The in-vehicle antenna had the following specification:

Frequency:	800-930 MHz
VSWR	Less than 1.9:1
Impedance:	50 ohms (normal)
Gain:	3 DB
Maximum Power:	50 watts
Polarization	Multi-directional circular base
Connector:	Polytetrafluoroethylene (Teflon)
	insulated TNC-P
Cable:	RG/u, 4.25 meters coaxial cable

PC Board: G10. FR4, copper tinted 7" x 1.75" PCB

Example 2

5 An in-vehicle antenna similar to the in-vehicle antenna of Example 1 was installed in the interior of a rear view mirror of a vehicle and was connected by to an AM/FM radio. Both the AM and FM reception was clear and strong and produced unexpected surprisingly good results.

10 Among the many advantages of the antenna system and antenna are that they: (1) enhance the aesthetic appeal of the vehicle; (2) prevent damage to antennas in car washes; (3) hide the antenna from vandals and thieves; (4) minimize blockage of vision for the driver and passengers and thereby promotes vehicle safety; provide (5) outstanding appeal to customers and radio and cellular telephone users; are (6) versatile; have (7) outstanding performance; (8) superior quality; are (9) easy to use; (10) convenient; (11) attractive; (12) economical; (13) reliable; (14) efficient; and (15) effective.

20 Although embodiments of the invention have been shown and described, it is to be understood that various modifications and substitutions, as well as rearrangements of parts and components can be made by those skilled in the art without departing from the novel spirit and scope of this invention.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 5 1. An antenna system for use in vehicles, comprising:
 a vehicle antenna-housing connected to a vehicle at a location spaced
from the trunk of the vehicle;
 an antenna secured to the vehicle antenna-housing;
 a receiving device selected from the group consisting of a cellular
10 telephone or a radio;
 said cellular telephone having a transceiver comprising a handset;
 said radio being selected from the group consisting of an AM radio, an
FM radio, and an AM/FM radio;
 a power supply comprising a vehicle battery connected to the receiving
15 device; and
 a coaxial cable for connecting the antenna to the receiving device.
2. An antenna system in accordance with claim 1 wherein:
 said vehicle antenna-housing comprises a rear view mirror; and
 said antenna comprises a rear view mirror-mounted antenna.
- 20 3. An antenna system in accordance with claim 1 wherein:
 said vehicle antenna-housing comprises a glove compartment; and
 said antenna comprises a glove compartment-mounted antenna.
4. An antenna system in accordance with claim 1 wherein:
 said vehicle antenna-housing comprises a sun visor positioned above the front
25 windshield in proximity to a driver or passenger in a front seat of the vehicle; and
 said antenna comprises a sun visor-mounted antenna.
5. An antenna system in accordance with claim 1 wherein:
 said vehicle antenna-housing comprises a dashboard; and
 said antenna comprises a dashboard-mounted antenna.
- 30 6. An antenna system in accordance with claim 1 wherein:
 said vehicle housing comprises a side view mirror mounted externally on the
side of the car adjacent a car door; and
 said antenna comprises a side view mirror-mounted antenna.
7. An antenna system in accordance with claim 1 wherein said vehicle is
35 selected from the group consisting of an automobile, station wagon, van, truck, jeep.

taxicab, bus, motorcycle, all-terrain vehicle, road-grading equipment, backhoe, tractor, and an agricultural vehicle.

8. An antenna system in accordance with claim 1 wherein said antenna comprises an antennae which extends externally upwardly from said housing.

5 9. An antenna system in accordance with claim 1 wherein said antenna comprises generally planar sections mounted on a board.

10. A cellular telephone system for use in vehicles, comprising:

an in-vehicle antenna-housing assembly comprising a rear view mirror housing having an interior, a rear housing portion secured to a portion of a vehicle in proximity to a windshield and a front housing portion connected to said rear housing portion, said vehicle being selected from the group consisting of an automobile, station wagon, van, truck, jeep, taxicab, bus, motorcycle, an all-terrain vehicle, road-grading equipment, backhoe, tractor, and an agricultural vehicle;

15 a rear view mirror secured to and peripherally surrounded by said front mirror portion, said rear view mirror having being located at a position for viewing by the driver of the vehicle;

an in-vehicle cellular telephone antenna comprising a mirror-mounted cellular telephone antenna disposed in the interior of said rear view mirror behind said rear view mirror, said cellular telephone antenna being secured to said rear view mirror housing for transmitting telephone signals along a frequency modulated band to another telephone and for receiving telephone signals from another telephone along frequency modulated channels;

20 a cellular telephone having a transceiver handset operatively connected to the transceiver, and a cradle operatively connected to the handset for receiving the handset;

a vehicle battery operatively connected to said cellular telephone; and
a coaxial feeder cable for connecting said mirror-mounted antenna to said cellular telephone; and

30 said coaxial feeder cable and said mirror-mounted antennae having substantially matching impedances to substantially minimize standing waves and loss of transmission power.

11. A cellular telephone system in accordance with claim 10 including a substantially planar board disposed within and secured to said rear view mirror housing; and a cable-receiving socket mounted on said board for receiving said coaxial feeder cable; and wherein said mirror-mounted cellular telephone antenna comprise a

substantially planar conductive metal antenna mounted on said board and connected to said cable-receiving socket; and said cellular telephone antenna has substantially aligned outwardly-diverging antenna sections, each antenna section having a cross section increasing stepwise towards a central portion of the antenna.

5 12. A cellular telephone system in accordance with claim 11 wherein:

 one of said antenna sections having a thicker inner antenna portion; a central foot portion extending transversely from said thicker inner antenna portion, an elongated outer portion, an inwardly diverging frustro-conical tapered portion connecting said outer portion to said inner portion, and said inner portion having a larger cross section than said outer portion; and

10 another of said antenna sections having a shorter, inner antenna portion, a thinner outer antenna portion, and an intermediate antenna portion integrally extending between the shorter inner portion and thicker outer antenna portions, inwardly diverging frustro-conical tapered portions connecting said shorter inner portion and thicker outer antenna portions, and said intermediate antenna portion having a cross section larger than said thicker outer portion but less than said shorter inner portion.

15 13. A cellular telephone system in accordance with claim 10 wherein said rear view mirror housing defines at least one mirror-housing window to permit telephone signals to enter and exit the interior of said rear view mirror housing, and said mirror-housing window communicating with cellular telephone antenna within the mirror housing and vehicle-window comprising a window selected from the group consisting of a front windshield and a side window, so that telephone signals can pass through the vehicle-window and mirror-housing window and be received by and radiate from the cellular telephone antenna.

20 14. A cellular telephone system in accordance with claim 10 including an extension arm and mounting plate for connecting said rear housing portion of said rear view mirror housing to said ceiling of said vehicle; and wherein

 said handset has a front and a back;

 said front of said handset, having an earpiece, a mouthpiece, and a handle extending between and connecting said earpiece and said mouthpiece, said earpiece having a convex circular ear-engageable portion with earholes for receiving a telephone call, and said mouthpiece comprising an inclined portion with mouthpiece holes for transmission of the user's voice into electrical impulses;

30 said back of the handset having a handset-display window for displaying the telephone number being called, a keypad with finger-engageable keys positioned below

said handset-display window, said keys comprising alpha numeric buttons, a send button and an end button; and

said cradle being shaped complementary to said earpiece of said handset to receive said earpiece.

- 5 15. A radio antenna system for use in vehicles, comprising:
 an in-vehicle antenna-housing assembly comprising a rear view mirror housing having an interior, a rear housing portion secured to a portion of a vehicle in proximity to a windshield and a front housing portion connected to said rear housing portion, said vehicle being selected from the group consisting of an automobile, station wagon, van, truck, jeep, taxicab, bus, motorcycle, an all-terrain vehicle, road-grading equipment, backhoe, tractor, and an agricultural vehicle;
 a rear view mirror secured to and peripherally surrounded by said front mirror portion, said rear view mirror having being located at a position for viewing by the driver of the vehicle;
15 an in-vehicle radio antenna comprising a mirror-mounted radio antenna disposed in the interior of said rear view mirror behind said rear view mirror, said radio antenna being secured to said rear view mirror housing for receiving radio signals;
 a radio selected from the group consisting of an AM radio, an FM radio, and an AM/FM radio;
20 a vehicle battery operatively connected to said radio;
 a coaxial feeder cable for connecting said mirror-mounted radio antenna to said radio;
 said coaxial feeder cable and said mirror-mounted antenna having substantially matching impedances to substantially minimize standing waves and signal interference;
25 a substantially planar board disposed within and secured to said rear view mirror housing;
 a cable-receiving socket mounted on said board for receiving said coaxial feeder cable;
30 said mirror-mounted radio antenna comprise a substantially planar conductive metal antenna mounted on said board and connected to said cable-receiving socket; and
 said radio antenna has substantially aligned outwardly-diverging antenna sections, each antenna section having a cross section increasing stepwise towards a
35 central portion of the antenna.

16. A radio antenna system in accordance with claim 15 wherein:

one of said antenna sections having a thicker inner antenna portion; a central foot portion extending transversely from said thicker inner antenna portion, an elongated outer portion, an inwardly diverging frusto-conical tapered portion connecting said outer portion to said inner portion, and said inner portion having a larger cross section than said outer portion; and

another of said antenna sections having a shorter, inner antenna portion, a thinner outer antenna portion, and an intermediate antenna portion integrally extending between the shorter inner portion and thicker outer antenna portions, inwardly diverging frusto-conical tapered portions connecting said shorter inner portion and thicker outer antenna portions, and said intermediate antenna portion having a cross section larger than said thicker outer portion but less than said shorter inner portion.

17. A radio antenna system in accordance with claim 15 wherein said rear view mirror housing defines at least one mirror-housing window to permit radio signals to enter and exit the interior of said rear view mirror housing, and said mirror-housing window communicating with radio antenna within the mirror housing and vehicle-window comprising a window selected from the group consisting of a front windshield and a side window, so that radio signals can pass through the vehicle-window and mirror-housing window and be received by the radio antenna.

18. A radio antenna system in accordance with claim 15 including an extension arm and mounting plate for connecting said rear housing portion of said rear view mirror housing to said ceiling of said vehicle; and a cellular telephone operatively connected to said radio antenna.

FIG. 1

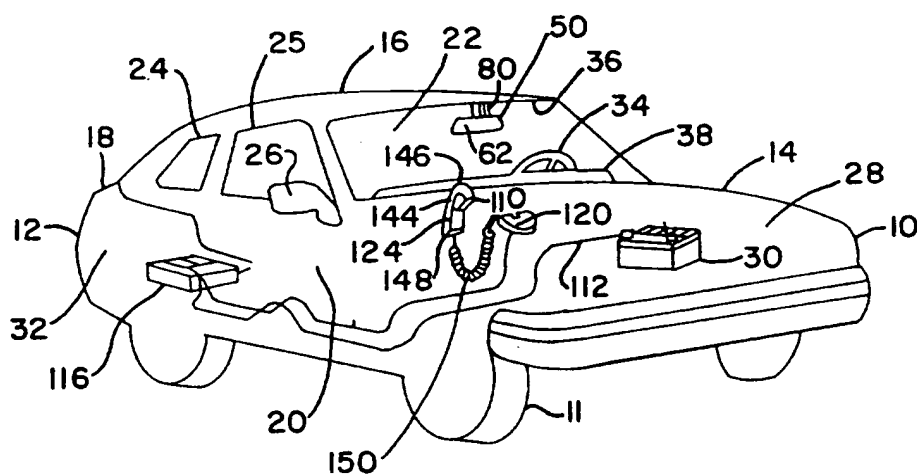


FIG. 2

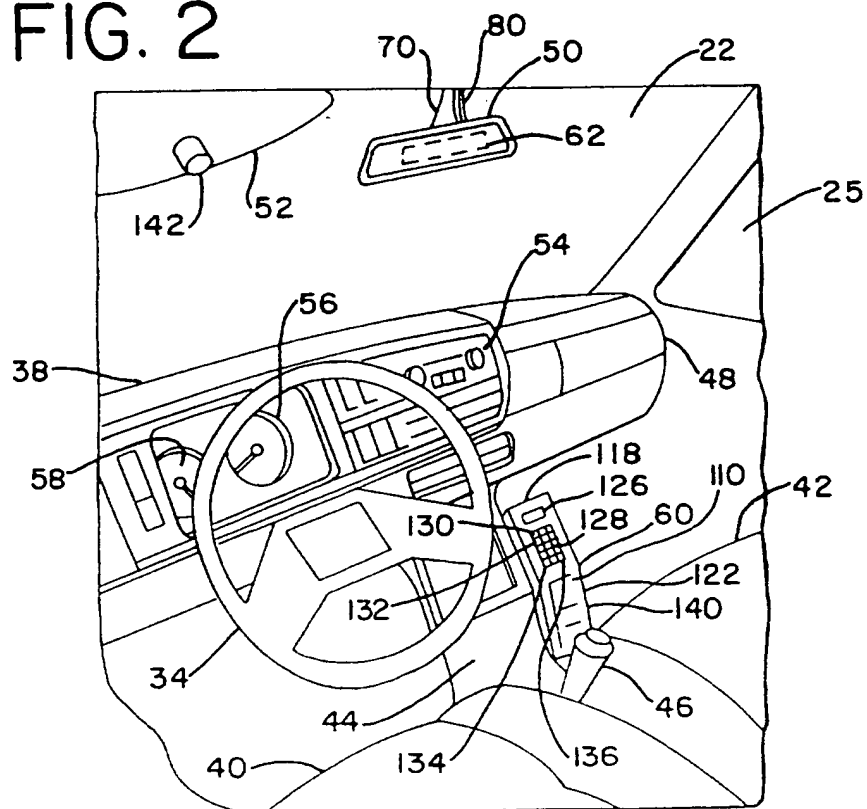


FIG. 3

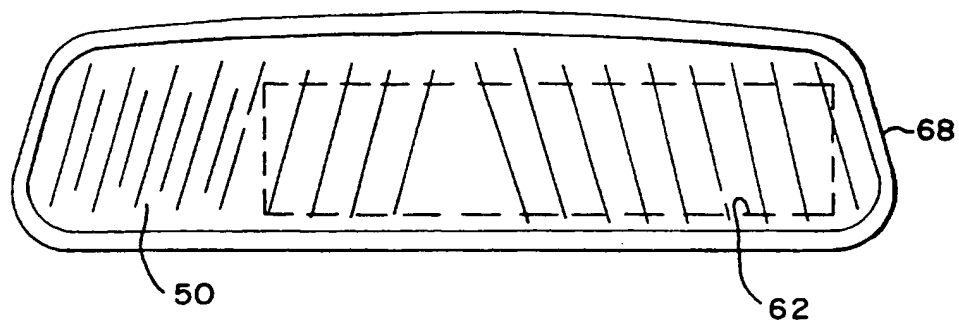


FIG. 4

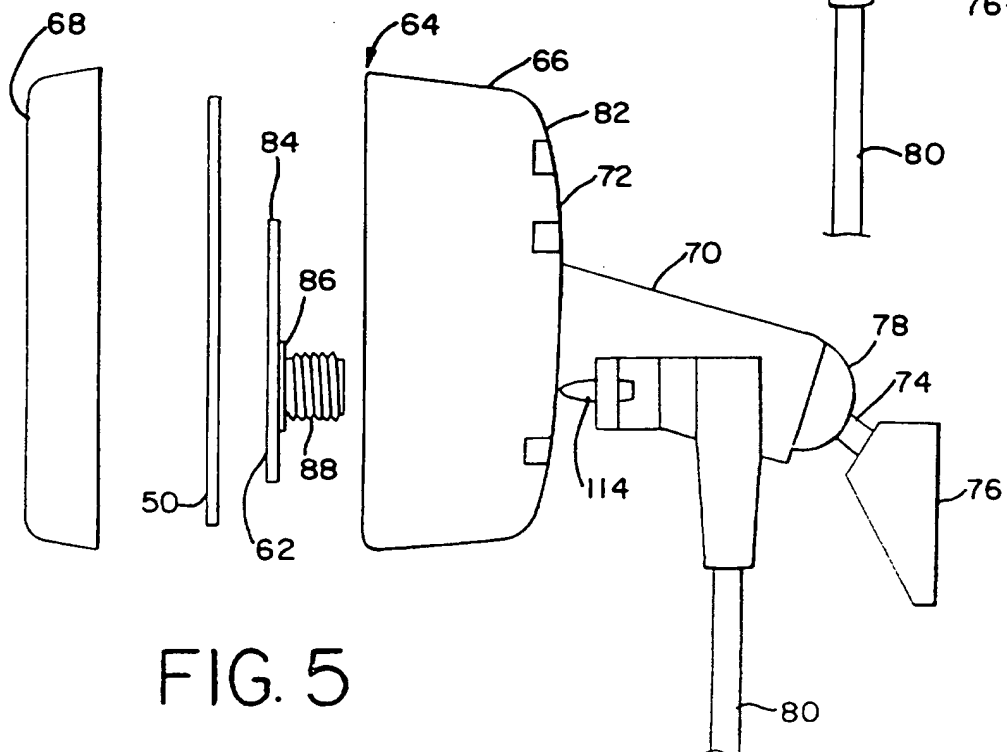
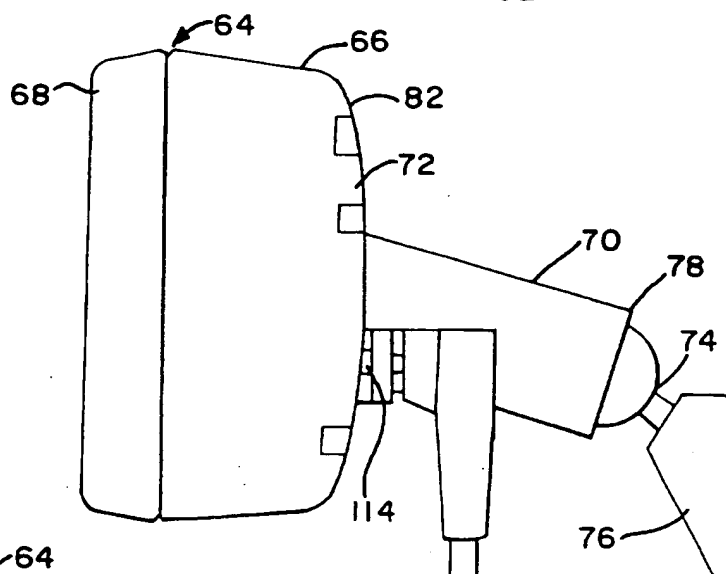
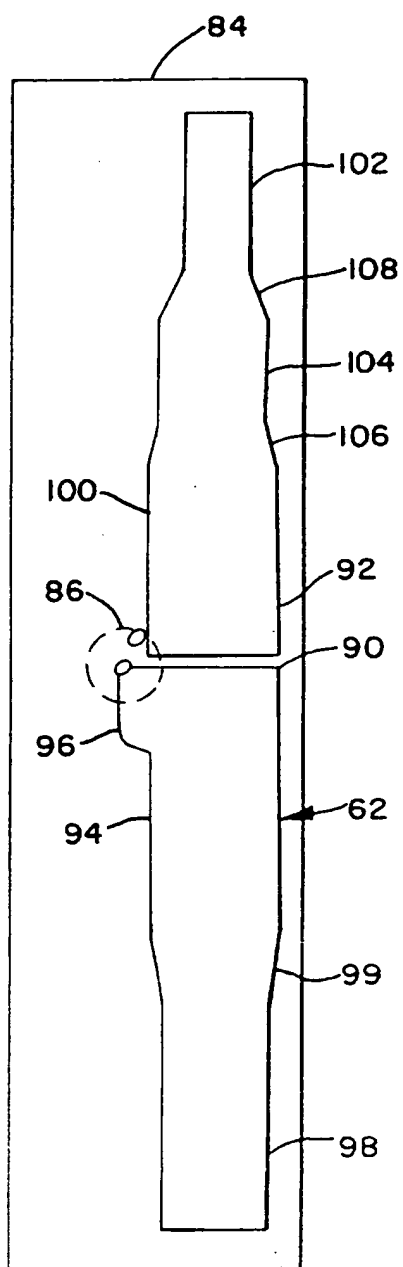


FIG. 6



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US96/03339

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(6) : H01Q 1/32; H05K 11/02

US CL : 455/89, 345, 351; 343/711-713

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

U.S. : 455/89-90, 345-351; 343/711-713, 795, 806-807

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

DERWENT

search terms: motor vehicle, rear view mirror aerial or antenna, radio telephone

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	US, A, 4,788,550 (CHADIMA, JR.) 29 November 1988, figures 1-2 and 4A.	1, 7-8, 10, 14-15
Y	US, A, 3,793,590 (ETLING ET AL) 19 February 1974, figure 1.	1 and 7
Y	GB, 2,157,633 (CHARLTON) 30 October 1985, figure 2.	2, 9, 10-11, 13, 15, 17-18
Y	US, A, 3,816,837 (SMITH) 11 June 1974, figure 4.	3
Y	US, A, 2,206,793 (STAUBLY) 02 July 1940, figure 1.	4
Y	US, A, 3,896,448 (KILLEN ET AL) 22 June 1975, figure 3.	5

☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. ☐ See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents	*T* later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
A document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be part of particular relevance	*X* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
E earlier document published on or after the international filing date	*Y* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
L document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	*G* document member of the same patent family
O document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means	
P document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed	

Date of the actual completion of the international search

31 MAY 1996

Date of mailing of the international search report

24 JUN 1996

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US96/03339

C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
Y	US, A, 4,760,394 (TAKEUCHI ET AL) 26 July 1988, figure 6.	6
Y	US, A, 4,675,687 (ELLIOTT) 23 June 1987, abstract, figure 1.	1 and 15